



Cabinet clears Rs.3,466 crore dam improvement project

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Highlights

- The government has approved a 65% hike, and extended by two years, a project to improve the stability and working of dams in 11 States.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the Dam Rehabilitation Improvement Project (DRIP) project.
- Out of the Rs.3,466 crore cleared, Rs.2,628 crore would be funded by the World Bank and Rs.747 crore by the States and Implementing Agencies (IAs), and the balance Rs.91 crore by the Central Water Commission (CWC).
- A dam safety Bill that sets directives on how the States and the Centre ought to have an institutional mechanism to better manage dams is still to be discussed in Parliament.
- The (DRIP) project will improve the safety and operational performance of selected existing dams and mitigate risks to ensure safety of downstream population and property.
- The primary beneficiaries are both urban and rural communities dependent on reservoir and downstream communities, who are prone to risk associated with dam failure or operational failure.

Six monthly reviews

- There are 198 existing dams in Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Jharkhand (Damodar Valley Corporation) and Uttarakhand (Uttarakhand Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited) that would benefit from the project.
- In lieu of the funds, dam managers would have to adhere to recommendations by the CWC as well as subject themselves to six monthly reviews by the World Bank and an audit by an independent French agency, said an official in the Union Water Ministry, who did not wish to be identified.
- Kerala, which saw devastating floods and questions raised on the management of its dams, will see 16 of the reservoirs managed by its Water Resources Department and 12 by that State's Electricity Department, get funded under the DRIP programme to the tune of Rs. 514 crore.